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Message Text

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43
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66603
DRAFTED BY: NEA/EGY:HFMATTHEWS
APPROVED BY: NEA/EGY- MR. MATTHEWS
S/S
---------- 072587
R 061914Z JAN 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 002130

EXDIS

FOLL REPEAT MOSCOW 0119 ACTION SECSTATE 04 JAN 75 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0119
XDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR UR EG SY IZ
SUBJECT: SOVIET OFFICIAL ON POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT
AND ME SITUATION

REF: MOSCOW 18213

1. SUMMARY. I CALLED ON M.D. SYTENKO,CHIEF OF THE MFA'S NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DIVISION, JANUARY 3 TO ASK ABOUT EH POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S ME TRIP AND TO GET HIS VIEWS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SYTENKO COULD ADD LITTLE TO WHAT HAS APPEARED IN THE SOVIET PRESS REGARDING THE CANCELLATION OF THE BREZHNEV TRIP, BUT HE LARGELY DISCOUNTED THE THEORY THAT BREZHNEV'S HEALTH WAS A FACTOR. HE WOULD NOT SPECULATE ABOUT WHEN THE VISIT MIGHT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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RESCHEDULED. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, SYTENKO PUT THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN TALKS IN THE MOST POSITIVE IGHT HE COULD. HE FOCUSED ON THE PUBLICILY STATED SOVIET COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS SUPPORTING THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF

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THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND JOINT SUPPORT FOR THE
PARTICIPATION OF THE PLO IN THE MEPC. HE HINTED THAT
THE EGYPTIANS HAD MADE REQUESTS FOR MODER WEAPONRY,
BUT GAVE NO DETAILS. SYTENKO STRONGLY RESTATED HIS
VIEW THAT THE GENEVA CONRERENCE SHOULD BE REOPENED
(REFTEL), BUT HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT THE U.S.
WAS COMMITTED TO RECONVENING THE MEPC QUICKLY.VVV

HE REITEREATED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE
WITHIN ITS 1967 BORDERS. HE SAID THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THE
PLO WOULD AGREE TO ATTEND THE MEPC IF THEY RECEIVED AN
INVITATION WHICH DID NOT REFER SPECIFICALLY TO SC
RESOLUTION 242, BUT USED A MORE GENERAL FORMULA
REFERRING TO "UN RESOLUTIONS." SYTENKO HAD NOTHING NEW
ABOUT HOW THE PLO MIGHT ATTEND THE CONFERENCE, AND,
CONSISTENT WITH HIS EARLIER VIEWS (REFTEL), WAS VAGUE
ABOUT THE TIMING OF PLO PARTICIPATION. ON THE ME SITUATION
GENERALLY, SYTENKO SAID MOSCOW IS CONVINCED THAT EGYPT AND
SYRIA WILL NOT START A NEW WAR, BUT THEY ARE CONCERNED
THAT ISRAEL MIGHTM HE CRITICIZED ISRAEL'S RIGIDITY AND
TEL AVIV'S CONTINUED INSISTENCE THAT "SMALL PIECES OF
TERRITORY" CAN PROVIDE A GUARANTEE OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY.
HE CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION WITH A SECOND STRONG PITCH
FOR RENEWAL OF THE MEPC AND CRITICAL COMMENT ON THE
STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WHICH HE
THOUGHT WAS DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT PRODUCED SUSPICION
AMONG THE CONFRONTATION STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. SYTENKO, WHO WAS EVIDENTLY UNDER CLOSE WRPAS, SAID
HE COULD NOT TELL ME VERY MUCH ABOUT THE CANCELLATION
OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT. HE NOTED THAT THERE ARE OCCASIONS
WHEN STATE VISITS ARE POSTPONED, AND THE ACTION IN THIS
INSTANCE SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED SO UNUSUAL. THERE WERE,
OF COURSE, THREE VISITS INVOLVED, AND ALL THE STATES HAD
AGREED TO POSTPONE THE VISIT FOR NOW. WHEN I ASKED
WHETHER THE POSTPONEMEMENT HAD RESULTED ONLY FROM SOVIET-
EGYPTIAN CONSIDERATIONS OR WHETHER OTHER MATTERS RELATING
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TO THE POSITIONSOF SYRIA AND IRAQ HAD ENTERED INTO THE
DECISION, SYTENKO DID NOT ANSWER DIRECTLY BUT REPEATED
THAT ALL THREE STATES INVOLVED HAD CONCURRED IN THE
POSTPONEMENT. ASKED WHETHER ANY TIME FRAME EXISTED FOR
RESCHEDULING THE BREZHNEV TOUR, HE SAID HE THOUGHT
TIMING HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE TALKS WITH THE
EGYPTIANS, AND HE COULD NOT PREDICT WHEN THE VISIT MIGHT
BE RESCHEDULED.

3. SYTENKO SHOWED SOME SENSITIVITY AND ANNOYANCE AT
WESTERN PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THE REASONS FOR THE
CANCELLATION OF THE TOUR. HE SAID HE DID NOT SEE WHY
THE PRESS WAS SPREADING SO MANY STORIES AND REPEAED

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THAT THERE WAS NOTHING "UNUSUAL" IF COUNTRIES DECIDED TO POSTPONE A STATE VISIT. HWEN I NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF PRESS STORIES HAD GIVEN BREZHNEV'S HEALTH AS THE REASON THE VISIT WAS CANCELLED, SYTENKO AVOIDED A DIRECT DENIAL THAT HEALTH WAS INVOLVED. BUT HE POINTEDLY NOTED THAT BREZHNEV HAD RECEIVED THE EGYPTIAN MINISTERS, BY IMPLICATION DISCOUNTING THE HEALTH STORY.

4. ASKED ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF FAHMY'S VISIT, SYTENKO MADE AN EFFORT TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN TALKS. HE REFERRED TO FAHMY'S POSITIVE STATEMENT ABOUT HIS MEETINGS HERE AND SAID THE SOVIETS ALSO TAKE A POSITIVE VIEW OF THE EGYPTIAN VISIT. HE THOUGHT THE TALKS HAD LAID A BASIS ON WHICH SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS CAN DEVELOP "UNTIL EGYPT AND THE USSR AGREE ON A NEW TIME FOR A VISIT." THE SOVIETS AND EGYPTIANS HAD AGREED ON THE JOINT STATEMENT ABOUT THE GENVA CONFERENCE. HE SAID U.S. REPRESENTATIVES HAD TOLD THE SOVIETS EGYPT WAS NOT READY FOR RENEWAL OF THE MEPC. NONETHELESS, THE SOVIETS AND EGYPTIANS IN OCTOBER AND NOW IN DECEMBER AGREED THAT THE MPEC SHOULD RECONVENE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SYTENKO ALSO EMPHASIZED SOVIET-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT ON THE PALESTINIANS, CITING THE JOINT STATEMENT'S REFERENCE TO THE PARTICIPATION OF "ALL INTERESTED PARTIES," INCUDING THE PLO AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS.

5. ON BILATERAL RELATIONS SYTENKO SAID THE SOVIETS CONFIRMED THAT THE USSR WOULD DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

EGYPT IN ALL FIELDS ON THE BASIS OF THE TREATY OF 1971. THE EGYPTIANS, IN TURN, RECIPROCATED THIS POSITION AND THANKED THE SOVIETS FOR THE HELP MOSCOW HAS GIVEN EGYPT AND THE OTHER ARABS. ECONOMIC AID HAD BEEN DISCUSSEDM THE EGYPTIANS HAD ASKED FOR EXPANSION OF SOME PROJECTS AND SOME NEW ONES. SYTENKO SAID THE ECONOMIC RELATIONS WOULD PROCEED NORMALLY. WHEN ASKED, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE HAD BEEN "NORMAL" TALKS ABOUT MILITARY SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION, BUT HE GAVE NO DETAILS. HOWEVER, HE HINTED THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD MADE REQUESTS FOR NEW SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS BY SAYING THAT HE KEEPS READING THAT THE U.S. IS PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH "MORE AND MORE AND MORE , EVEN FROM MILITARY STOCKPILES." HE SAID: "THE ARABS SEE THIS AND ASK US FOR WEAPONS."

6. I ASKED SYTENKO ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, NOTING THAT THERE STILL APPEARS TO BE CONCERN THAT TO REOPEN THE TALKS WITHOUT SOME UNDERSTANDING ABOUT PROCEDURES AND RESULTS MIGHT PRODUCE A STALEMATE. SYTENKO SAID, ON THE CONTRARY, THAT IF THE U.S. AND USSR AGREED FIRST ABOUT CONVENING THE MPEC THE PROBLEMS

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COULD BE SOLVED. HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM ABOU THE
SECRETARY'S PRIVATE REMARK IN NEW YORK LAST
FALL WHICH HAD INDICATED THAT THE CONFERENCE MIGHT
RECONVENE IN JANUARY. HE SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE U.S.
WAS KEEPING TO THIS.
7. ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS, HE SAID HE THOUGHT ALL
NOW UNDERSTOOD THATISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967
BOUNDRIES IS ESSNETIAL. WHEN I ASKED IF THE 1967
BOUNDARIES WERE STILLTHOSE SUPPORTED BY THE USSR,SYTENKO
SAID THIS IS THE SOVIET POSITION AND IT IS THE POSITION
OF EGYPT AND SYRIA. SYTENKO ALSO REITERATED SOVIET
SUPPORT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL.

8. ASKED ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF PLO PARTICIPATION AND
THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE 1967 FRONTIERS, SYTENKO SAID
THE PLO IS DIFFERENT. MOSCOW HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT
THE PLO WILL AGREE TO GO TO GENEVA. THE MODERATES IN
THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT WILL SUPPORT PARTICIPATION.
HOWEVER, THEY FIRST NEED AN INVITATION SIMILAR TO THE
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INVITATIONS WHICH WERE ISSUED TO T E OTHER PARTICIPANTS
BY WALDHEIM. ALSO, AN INVITATION TO THE PLO CANNOT BE
ON THE BASIS OF SC RESOLUTION 242. SYTENKO SUGGESTED
THAT A VAGUER FORMULTATION IGHT BE ACCEPTABLE WHICH
REFERRED ONLY TO "UN RESOLUTIONS." SYTENKO SAID SUCH
AN INVITATION MIGHT NOT BE NCESSARY FOR THE MODERATES,
BUT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO THE RADICALS LIKE HABASH
WHO TAKES THE POSITION THAT PARTICIPATION IN THE MEPC
AMOUNTS TO TREASON.

9. SYTENKO HAD NOTHING NEW ON HOW THE PALESTINIANS
MIGHT GO TO GENEVA. HE RESTAED HIS EARLIER VIEW (REFTEL)
THAT THIS WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE QUADRIPARTITE
MEETING IN CAIRO. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE MEETING WOULD
RESOLVE THIS QUESTION. HOWEVER, HE CONCLUDED IT WAS
CLEAR THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE ANY LONGER TO HAVE THE
GENEVA CONFERENCE REOPEN WITHOUT PLO PARTICIATION.
AS TO THE TIMING OF THEIR PARTICIPATION, THIS COULD
BE DECIDED ONCE A FIRM DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO
RECONVENE GENVA.

10. I ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY DEVELOPMENTS
REGARDING THE PLO'S MOSCOW OFFICE, SYTENKO SAID THAT THE
PLO HAD NOT YET NAMED ANYONE TO STAFF IT, AND THE SOVIETS
HAD RECEIVED NO INFORMATION ABOUT WHEN IT WOULD OPEN.
HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT ALL THE PLO
HAS TO DO IS NAME SOME PEOPLE TO THE OFFICE AND MOSCOW
IS READY TO OPEN IT.

11. I ASKED SYTENKO'S IMPRESSION ABOUT THE GENERAL
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID THE SOVIETS AE

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CONVINCED THAT EGYPT AND SYRIA WILL NOT START A WAR.
HOWEVER, THE USSR IS AFRAID ISRAEL MIGHT. TEL AVIV
CONTINUES TO TALK ABOUT A "PREVENTIVE STRIKE" AND ABOUT
DESTROYING THE SYRIAN ARMY. SYTENKO EXPRESSED CONCERN
THAT ISRAEL MIGHT NOT OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGE STARTING
HOSTILITIES, BUT MIGHT DEVELOP SOME PRETEXT FOR TAKING
ACTION (HE REFERRED, IN THIS CONTEXT, TO THE GERMAN-
POLISY BORDER INCIDENT WHICH HITLER USED TO JUSTIFY
THE INVASION OF POLAND). I REPLIED THAT AS SYTENKO
KNEW THE U.S. BELIEVED RESTRAINT ON ALL SIDES WAS
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ESSENTIAL AND NOTED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD RECENTLY
SAID THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE TOO MUCH LOOSE TALK ABOUT
WAR IN THE AREA.

12. SYTENKO CONCLUDED WITH A THIRD STRONG PITCH TO RENEW
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND SOME CRITICAL COMMENT ABOUT
THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH. HE SAID THE PROBLEMS OF THE
ME HAVE TO BE LOOKED AFTER. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND
ISRAEL'S RIGIDITY. HE REITERATED HIS EARLIER STATED VIEW
THAT ISRAEL SHOULD GIVE UP THE IDEA THAT IT CAN PROVIDE
FOR ITS OWN SECURITY OR CAN INSURE ITS SECURITY BY
"GRABBING" SMALL PIECES OF TERRITORY THROUGH THE
PROCESS OF "MINOR RECTIFICATIONS." HE SAID ONLY
INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES CAN PROVIDE THE SECURITY
ISRAEL WANTS, AND THESE GUARANTEES CAN BE DISCUSSED AT
GENEVA. HE REITERATED THAT THE USSR IS PREPARED TO
PARTICIPATE IN GUARANTEES. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO
GET PEOPLE TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. THEN EVERYONE
WOULD KNOW THAT THE PARTIES ARE TALKING ABOUT A
SETTLEMENT AND NOT PREPARING FOR WAR. IN THIS CONTEXT,
HE SAID, THE SOVIETS HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOU THE
DIFFICULTIES OF ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, REFERRING
TO RUMORS ABOUT A POSSIBLE SECOND DISENGAGEMENT IN
SINAI, HE SAID THAT IF SEPARATE DEALS ARE MADE, IT WILL
BE MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE OTHERS WILL BE SUSPICIOUS.
A DISENGAGEMENT COULD TAKE PLACE DURING TALKS AT GENEVA,
UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF A MEPC, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER
TO HAVE THE CONFERENCE DISCUSS AND FORMULATE THE
DOCUMENTS, POSSIBLY IN A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH.

13. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS THIS MESSAGE TO
INTERESTED ME POSTS.
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UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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